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# The Rhetoric of Digitization and the Politicization of Canadian Heritage

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## ABSTRACT

Canadian heritage institutions are perceived as being used as political instruments of nation-branding to advance a government ideological agenda. Faced with budget reductions and increased federal government oversight, the national library and archives of Canada, titled Library and Archives Canada (LAC), has, in the eyes of stakeholders, abdicated its stewardship role and responsibility for all of the nation's collections and records to focus on government priorities. Behind what has been described as a "smokescreen" of digitization, a "modernization" approach at LAC has resulted in the loss of expertise, a moratorium on acquisitions, and the elimination of national archival development and interlibrary loan programs. This paper examines the new strategic priorities of LAC with respect to digitization and resource allocation against a failed digital strategy, which has impacted its ability to fulfill its legislated responsibility for acquisition, preservation, and access; explores the ramifications and barriers created by the digital priorities and strategy of LAC for underserved populations, with a focus on Canada's Indigenous peoples; and concludes with a discussion of the findings and recommendations of the 2014 Royal Society of Canada's expert panel's report, *The Future Now: Canada's Libraries, Archives, and Public Memory*.

## INTRODUCTION

"War on knowledge"; "Assault on the past"; "Knowledge massacre"; "Library destruction"; "Libricide."<sup>1</sup> The language of war has entered the lexicon of librarians and archivists in Canada. However, unlike the politically turbulent regions of the world, where libraries and archives are destroyed through violent acts, in this case the destruction is seen as being silently

perpetrated by a government prioritizing political and economic considerations over the social good and public, civic responsibilities. This perceived destruction has given rise to an unprecedented and highly emotionally charged response from not only the academic community but from a wide spectrum of Canadians who view the “dismantling and scattering” of Canada’s national archives as barbaric (Doctorow, 2012, n.p.).

Responsibility for Canadian heritage is shared among a “complex multilevel landscape of memory institutions that vary by type, size, resources, and jurisdictions.” Within this landscape there is “a core set of institutions . . . formally legislated with a mandate to preserve Canadian heritage which have [*sic*] traditionally been seen by the public as trusted sources of knowledge and essential pillars for a cohesive society” (Council of Canadian Academies, 2015, p. 9). In 2004 the merger of the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada was intended to “create a unique and modern knowledge institution, with the authority and governance structure required to fulfill its mandate” (Auditor General of Canada, 2003, p. 30). However, since that merger, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has faced unprecedented and devastating budget cuts that have impeded the institution’s ability to fulfill its mandate as outlined by the Library and Archives Act. While significant cuts to LAC in the name of deficit reduction were made by the previous Liberal government (Canadian Association of University Teachers [CAUT], 1997), more recent reductions (or “efficiencies”) are perceived by some as part of a neoliberal government agenda that emphasizes small government, corporatization, managerial efficiency, and privatization. Along with minimal government intervention, there is a centralization of authority resulting in a shrinking of the public sphere. As pointed out by Waugh (2014), the “market ethos” poses challenges for “libraries as cultural institutions,” and also for librarians “whose values emulate core democratic principles of intellectual freedom, open access, and social justice” (p. 1).

At the core of the controversy over LAC is a collision of values and starkly competing visions of the role of Canada’s premier memory institution, an emphasis on control of information versus the belief that “access to information is a critical democratic right” (English, 1999, p. 11). As pointed out by Frenette (2014), since most Canadian intellectuals do not espouse conservative principles, there is “a profound distrust on the part of the government’s inner circle for artists, journalists, scholars, and even top civil servants” (p. 53). This has extended to the implementation of a controversial code of conduct for LAC staff that prohibited their participation in activities such as teaching, speaking, or being guests at conferences, because such activities were deemed to be “high risk to LAC and to the employee with regard to conflict of interest, conflict of duties and duty of loyalty” (LAC, 2012a, p. 17). Not surprisingly, this provoked a huge outcry from the academic, library, and archival communities, with the At-

lantic Provinces Library Association (APLA) sufficiently concerned to file a complaint with the Information Commissioner of Canada: “Access to the expertise of LAC staff is important to APLA members and no barrier to professional exchange will go unchallenged at the Association level” (APLA, 2014, p. 2). The Minister of Heritage and Official Languages, James Moore, responded that LAC operates at arm’s length from the government, and that the government was not consulted regarding the code of conduct put in place by Daniel Caron, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada (cited in Parliament of Canada [2013a, sec. 1425]).

### THE POLITICS OF HERITAGE

There is a reciprocal distrust on the part of the intellectual community for the Conservative government. From the intellectual community’s perspective, it would appear that there is not a shortage of funds as taxes are reduced and government ministries and departments shrink and reduce services, allowing monies to lapse to be returned to the center so that a balanced budget may be achieved in advance of a federal election. In 2011, the Conservative Party elected a majority government promising that “through accelerated reductions in government spending, a re-elected Stephen Harper government will eliminate the deficit by 2014–15” (Conservative Party of Canada, 2011, p. 23). This, it was assured, would be accomplished without raising taxes. In defense of cuts to LAC, Moore stated that “we were elected as a government asking Canadians to trust us with a majority government and saying that we would arrive at a balanced budget without raising taxes and without cutting health care. That means that we have some difficult choices to make” (cited in Parliament of Canada [2013b, sec. 1555]). However, what is also believed to be at play is a larger political and ideological agenda of nation-branding, with roots in a new-found nationalism. The government of Canada appears to have different priorities and an explicit agenda when it comes to Canadian heritage. The Conservatives have devoted significant financial resources to projects in support of conservative ideological agendas, “despite the budgetary constraints they have imposed on Canadian society” (Frenette, 2014, p. 53). Neoliberal austerity, as pointed out by Rozworski (2015, n.p.), “is aimed at specific expenditures and particular groups” while spending is redirected. The sum of CAN\$28 million was expended to celebrate the War of 1812, which included government-funded celebrations, exhibitions, historical reenactments, commemorative stamps and coins, and even the deployment of naval ships. Another CAN\$25 million was expended to rename and overhaul the Canadian Museum of Civilization, now known as the Canadian Museum of History. In a nod to Canada’s conservative monarchist past, additional millions have been allocated to restore the royal designations for Canada’s navy and air force. This has been met with charges that the government is rewriting history and gutting institutions. In what has

been described as “conscripting Canada’s past” (Frenette, 2014, n.p.) and a “political use of the past” (Peace, 2013, n.p.), it is widely perceived that the Conservative government—or per the 2010 directive to public servants that “Government of Canada” should be replaced in federal communications by “Harper Government” (Cheadle, 2011, n.p.)—has a “politically charged heritage policy” and is looking to create a “muscular history that would link into a muscular form of identity” (Geddes, 2013, n.p.).

This pursuit of a conservative ideological agenda has impacted the strategic directions of LAC, as well as its programs and services, including selection and acquisition, exhibitions, celebrations, and priorities for digitization. Meanwhile, the budget cuts of the previous decades have resulted in the loss of LAC’s leadership and stewardship role, a failed digitization and modernization strategy, and a renouncement of the development of the Canadian library and archival communities. According to CAUT (2013), by 2014–2015 LAC’s budget, adjusted for inflation, will be just 58 percent of what it was in 1990–1991. LAC’s annual budget is, in constant Canadian dollars, \$33 million less than it was in 1990. By far the most precipitous decline began in 2012 when the Conservative federal budget further reduced LAC’s funding by CAN\$3.5 million, \$6.6 million in 2013, and \$9.6 million in 2014–2015, and each year thereafter (CAUT, 2012a, n.p.). The need to find “efficiencies” in the light of “resource realities” or “resource constraints” is a common refrain in LAC’s annual *Report on Plans and Priorities* (2010a, p. 9; 2011, p. 13; 2012c, p. 8). The cuts have impacted every aspect of LAC operations, including acquisitions, programs, services, and staff. A reference query posed to LAC earlier this year generated the following automated response: “We acknowledge receipt of your request. Please be assured that your question will be processed as soon as our capacity permits. Please note that there can be a delay of up to 4 months for a response. We would be pleased to provide an update if your request is overdue or your request is urgent” (LAC, personal communication, January 26, 2015).

Meanwhile, the CAN\$9.6 million in budget cuts, in the words of Conservative MP James Rajotte and chair of the Standing Committee on Finance, are described as “savings [to] reduce inefficiencies and reduce the federal deficit over the medium term” in the name of “corporate modernization and increased digital services and programming” (2015, n.p.). It should be noted that LAC is not the only national archives facing resource constraints. In the United States, “sequestration” reduced the National Archives and Records Administration budget in 2011 by US\$19.7 million (U.S. Congress, 2013). Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, in 2010 the National Archives began implementing a 25 percent reduction in public funding over four years (Ithaka S + R, 2011).

### MODERNIZATION RHETORIC

LAC's contested and controversial modernization agenda dates back to 2004, the same year as the merger of the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada (and prior to the election of the Harper government). LAC released a discussion paper titled *Creating a New Kind of Knowledge Institution*, describing "broad directions" for the newly created institution (LAC, 2004). As Oliphant and McNally (2014, p. 55) write, "The LAC would be transformed from an institution focused on acquisitions and preservation to one focused on digital access and preservation." The change in emphasis has prompted accusations of a lack of respect and appreciation for the traditional role of the public archives (Bruno, 2012). "This shift in policy was justified by the assumption that new technology would make LAC more cost-efficient while rendering many core services obsolete," according to Oliphant and McNally (2014, p. 55). In fact, over the last decade LAC has issued numerous forward-looking documents, with similar rhetoric and themes around modernization and digitization; lacking in specificity and detail, the documents are replete with platitudes. Of note, one of the most frequently repeated words is "new." While holding hope of some promise, it is sufficiently vague, thus enabling it to be open to interpretation. In a 2010 report titled *Shaping Our Continuing Memory Collectively*, Librarian and Archivist of Canada Daniel Caron used it a total of twenty-nine times in ten pages: for example, there is a "new institution," "new organizational structure," "new possibilities," "new challenges," "new digital environment," "new principles," "new methods," "new landscape," "new practices," "new perspectives," "new processes," "new ways," "new approaches," "new institutional orientations," "new working structures," and so forth. We are told, "The *new* landscape demands a *new* and different set of principles from the perspective of the user. The answer will come through finding *new* ways to describe material as a foundation for resource discovery as well as a growing presence on the web" (p. 3). Refuting charges that there has been an attack on LAC, this view has been echoed by Moore, who stated that "Library and Archives Canada will certainly be able to continue meeting its commitments by using new technologies and other means" (cited in Parliament of Canada [2012a, sec. 1505]).

In 2012, the same year when devastating budget cuts were introduced, LAC announced a decentralized model and informed the library and archival communities that LAC's "monopoly as stewards of the national documentary heritage is over" (CAUT, 2012a, n.p.). An institution that was once praised for its "total archives" approach was now seen as abdicating its leadership and stewardship role and abandoning a publicly funded and federally coordinated approach to the preservation and acquisition of both government and private-sector records. LAC's "Principles of Mod-

ernization” included a more collaborative approach to fulfill its mandate and sharing the responsibility for documentary heritage; redefining selection; and improving access to holdings by making descriptions simpler (LAC, 2012b). As pointed out by Milligan (2012, n.p.), the “rhetoric of modernization” is widely believed to be a smokescreen for budget cuts.

Behind such rhetoric lies the rhetoric of digitization, which is being used to justify the cuts. LAC, in its *Report on Plans and Priorities 2012–2013*, announced that “LAC is pursuing a comprehensive modernization agenda to ensure that it delivers its mandate in a way that takes advantage of the digital revolution. Initiatives, such as a new service delivery model that makes the most of new technologies will increasingly connect all Canadians with this country’s documentary heritage” (2012c, p. 1). It even acknowledged that digitization is in some measure a response to budget cuts: “Given resource realities, LAC must find efficiencies while seeking to expand its reach among Canadians. This means shifting its emphasis from the traditional labour-intensive and in-person approaches to approaches that leverage digital technologies and collaboration with users and other communities of interest, enabling much wider connections with citizens” (2012c, p. 8). According to Allain and Babcock (2013), “Digitization rhetoric [is a] misrepresentation of digitization as a solution to issues of describing, making accessible and ascribing value to archives and special collections.” It also “ignores the very real and inherent limitations of digital records—such as obsolescence, the tremendous investment of resources required, and the exclusion of users who don’t operate in an online environment” (slide 2). In their analysis of LAC digitization rhetoric, they found that “13 out of 20 (65%) of government documents used digitization rhetoric to justify the cuts and changes at Library and Archives Canada” (slide 8).

While LAC’s program of digitization has been presented as a “universal panacea, it has yet to yield results” (Frenette, 2014, p. 63). According to documents obtained by CAUT through the Access to Information Act, only 0.5 percent of the archive’s publications have been made available electronically. At the current pace, they point out that electronically uploading every historic record into an online database could take seventy years (CAUT, 2012b). The Canadian Council of Archives (CCA, 2012) asserts that digitization is being proposed as “a catch-all solution” (p. 3). The failure of LAC’s digital strategy is supported by several highly critical reports by the Auditor General of Canada. In 2003, the Auditor General’s report found that “archival heritage is at risk because federal departments have given little attention to information management in recent years” (p. 1); it also found that “after more than 12 years of limited success in its modernization attempts, the National Archives has no assurance of fulfilling its mandate without undertaking another major revision” (p. 17). In 2014, the Auditor General’s report examining the years between 2009–

2010 and 2014–2015 revealed that LAC does not adequately fulfill its responsibilities for acquiring, preserving, and providing access to government documentary heritage; has a backlog that contains approximately 98,000 boxes of archival records; and has no corporate digital strategy or program in place. Furthermore, it found that “from 2006 to 2011, Library and Archives Canada spent \$15.4 million to develop and implement a trusted digital repository, which was completed in 2011 but was never used,” and “that the entity still did not have an integrated system to manage the electronic transfer, preservation, and storage of digital information, and provide digital access to its collection by Canadians” (p. 9).

### THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

How do LAC’s digital priorities and modernization strategy impact underserved populations, and Canada’s Indigenous peoples in particular? To what extent do these digital priorities and strategy reflect government priorities, as opposed to the needs of Canadians? Digitization raises important issues of selection and access. What materials are given priority for digitization? Are they reflective of a diverse Canadian society? How easy is it for a broad spectrum of users to access them? As it has been argued, “The digitization of materials, under the neoliberal banner of democratization and access, actually erects significant barriers and allows for very interested [*sic*] processes of selectivity” (Dolmage, 2013, p. 116). Does digitization perpetuate what is perceived by some as the archival practice of “[privileging] the voices of those with power and influence in society,” and do “inclusions and exclusions from our histories and national stories mirror and reinforce the same inclusions and exclusions in wider society?” (Flinn, 2010, n.p.). In 2012 Caron openly stated that digitization would be “selective” and that “not all documentation deserves to be digitized.” He further said, “Many things are very interesting and will need to be digitized. But there are also a lot of things that are less interesting or that are going to appeal to small segments of the population. So those materials can wait. They will not necessarily be digitized. They may never be digitized” (cited in Parliament of Canada [2012b, sec. 1230]).

Former Librarian and Archivist of Canada Ian Wilson (2012, p. 242) has asked, “While archives claim to support the human rights of minorities, to what extent are these groups even aware of the existence of the archive? . . . For too many the profound lack of awareness of the archives or even the remote scholarly image of our institutions means the record effectively does not exist.” Historian and former LAC archivist Laura Madokoro (2014, p. 154) argues that the “ongoing cultural divide inhibits First Nations peoples from actively shaping archival holdings, rather than being the passive recipients of decisions about acquisition and preservation made by institutions with mandates that are very different from the First Nations historical experience in Canada.” Meanwhile, the historic margin-

alization of immigrant groups who were subject to discrimination is replicated in the country's archival holdings, as opposed to the "much richer, textured experience of their lives in Canada" (pp. 155–156).

In 2013 the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) established an expert panel on "The Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives," resulting in its 2014 report, *The Future Now: Canada's Libraries, Archives, and Public Memory*. One of the most frequently cited concerns in the many submissions received by the panel was the ongoing digital divide in Canada's rural and remote communities. The Library Association of Alberta (2013) describes library services as a "postcode lottery" depending on "local funding and infrastructure" (p. 1). Meanwhile, the establishment of its first public library on a First Nations reserve was celebrated only as recently as 2013. The Nunavut Library Association (2013) reports that "the digital divide is a major issue faced by every type of library in Nunavut," and that "this divide includes issues of hardware, broadband capacity, and the very high cost of service" (p. 1). The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (2014) describes library services as "a patchwork quilt across Canada of services, on and off reserve, for native Canadians (p. 2)." In addition, the Canadian Library Association (CLA, 2014) states, "Good library service for First Nations, Inuit and Métis remains a major challenge and unmet need in this country"; "territorial funding does not permit every community to have a library, therefore many territorial residents have little direct access to library services regardless of the nature of the materials and services provided"; and that there is a "lack of infrastructure and access to technology for some of Canada's least affluent citizens" (pp. 8–9). Given the digital divide in terms of access and education, it was asserted by the University of Regina Library (2014) that "increased digitization of materials and more digital resources are not always the solution to reaching out to aboriginal and/or remote communities" (University of Regina Library, 2014, p. 2). Access is further threatened and reduced by LAC's public/private partnerships with organizations such as *Canadiana.org* and *Ancestry.ca*, which are perceived as creating a digital paywall for the use of public resources.

A casualty of LAC's budget cuts in pursuit of a modernization agenda was the elimination of the National Archival Development Program (NADP), created in 2006 and administered by the CCA. The NADP, it can be argued, mitigated against the selectivity of representation in public and national archives while advancing the digitization of archival holdings at the local community level. It is widely acknowledged that "for a small amount of money, the NADP had a high return on investment" (Halifax Regional Municipality Archives, 2014, p. 2). The program was created to provide financial assistance to the nonprofit CCA and related organizations to increase their capacity to preserve and make accessible unique archival materials about Canada and Canadians (LAC, 2010b, p. 4). Operat-

ing in ten provinces and three territories, one of NADP's objectives was to increase the representation of Aboriginal peoples and underrepresented ethnocultural groups in Canada's archives (p. 6). The work of the CCA was once lauded as "a model of how national, provincial and other archival institutions can work together to improve accessibility to their collections for all Canadians" (English, 1999, p. 15). An audit of the NADP conducted under the auspices of LAC (2010b) validated the effective administration and delivery of this program, which has been described as the "single largest pool of federal funding in support of digitization" (CCA, 2012, p. 3). Meanwhile, the minister reported that "when we worked with Daniel Caron and Library and Archives Canada and asked them to put together proposals to reduce their spending by between 5% and 10% and to come up with the programs that are the least efficient and the least effective in their eyes, based on their own self-assessment, this is what they arrived at as the program that was the least effective" (cited in Parliament of Canada [2013b, sec. 1555]). Regarding the elimination of the NADP, the CCA (2012) stated,

It is not an exaggeration to say that we now face the collapse of the Canadian archival system—a system that is composed of an interlocking network of federal-level standards-generating bodies, provincial professional associations, and the heritage institutions they support. These include the archives of Canada's indigenous peoples, ethnic and cultural groups, religious communities, cities and towns, museums, universities, educational institutions, historical societies, and more. (p. 1)

The 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples noted that "a substantial portion of the history of Aboriginal people resides in government files, church storerooms, and archives across Canada" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 1996, n.p.). Many Aboriginal communities do not have their own archives or records-management programs. The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (2012) has said, "The decision to eliminate the NADP will have a far reaching and devastating impact not only on the Canadian archival community and the Canadian public but also on First Nations, both now and in the future, as their rich documentary heritage is put at risk by the loss of this important program." As has been pointed out by the University of British Columbia (2013), "Until recently, much of the archival material about Aboriginal people is administered by non-Aboriginals, thus creating archival captives, because 'to be an Indian is to have non-Indians control your documents from which other non-Indians write their version of your history.' Records administered by Aboriginal groups can allow them to control their own history and take possession of their identities" (n.p.). Archival records have played important roles in land-claim proceedings and the work of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## CONCLUSION

The RSC's 2014 *The Future Now* report gave voice to the deep anger and frustration on the part of a wide range of stakeholders that underscored "the universal perception of a decades-long service decline of [LAC's] component service elements" (p. 41). Lament was expressed at the lack of leadership: "Canada doesn't lack leadership in libraries and archives—we have many committed, innovative and visionary leaders in our libraries and archives. What we are lacking is leadership at the national level" (p. 43). Concern was also cited about the lack of investment on the part of the Canadian government in providing "access and stewardship" for both digital and print collections, as well as creating a "national digitization program, in coordination with memory institutions across the country, [to bring] Canada's cultural and scientific heritage into the digital era to ensure that we continue to understand the past and document the present as guides to the future" (p. 12). As argued by the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society (2013, p. 3), "Collaboration requires leadership and, at a national level, Libraries and Archives Canada should be empowered to provide pan-Canadian leadership."

Following the resignation of Caron in 2013, a wide range of stakeholders mobilized to draft a "Joint Statement on the Qualities of a Successful Librarian and Archivist of Canada" (CLA, 2013). The appointment of Caron, a career public servant and economist, was seen as a departure from the previous appointment of the highly respected and qualified Ian Wilson. "He's not a traditional [appointment] but it's a different kind of institution today. It's not your local public library," Wilson said of Caron (cited in Bradshaw [2009, n.p.]). Concern has been raised about the position of Librarian and Archivist of Canada being held by a public servant who answers first to government masters and is less concerned about his/her obligations to the wider archival community or Canadian society. Guy Berthiaume, a classical scholar with a long career as a university administrator, succeeded Caron. There has been a call that "Berthiaume must re-engage, and be supported in that re-engagement by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, and assume the appropriate leadership role as circumstances dictate, and take his seat with real and sustained participation" (RSC, 2014, p. 46). In one of his first interviews, he was quoted as saying that he sees "digitization as the future of collections," and also, "There have been major budget cuts at LAC. I cannot deny that, but it's over. The work has been done. The cuts have been absorbed" (cited in Scott [2014, n.p.]).

On June 12, 2015, Berthiaume delivered a speech at the annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Archivists in Regina, Saskatchewan, where he announced the new Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP). The website went live, brochures were available, and participants were asked to "kindly wait until the presentation is over before rushing out

the door to fill out your forms!” (Berthiaume, 2015, n.p.). An amount of approximately CAN\$8.7 million over five years was being made available “to support the development of Canada’s local archival and library communities by increasing their capacity to preserve, provide access to and promote documentary heritage and will provide opportunities for local documentary heritage communities to evolve and remain sustainable and strategic” (LAC, 2015, n.p.). It was a highly political announcement. The successful and well-established NADP had been replaced by a program with an application cycle in the current year lasting only twelve weeks (with a deadline just before a federal election), running the risk of resulting in what the Saskatchewan Archives Board (2013) describes as an “increasing web-presentation of digitized archival materials [that] continues to occur primarily through special projects, year-end allocation of resources or in response to anniversary events,” resulting in “a smattering of often thematic presentations, rarely complete fonds and frequently limited context to the archival record, its creator or its custodial history” (p. 3). And in the words of the Archives Association of Ontario (2014, p. 4), “While grants are useful for supporting discrete projects they are inappropriate for sustaining memory institutions with mandates to serve future generations.” A “public good” deserves adequate funding. Concern has been expressed by members of the Canadian archival community regarding the DHCP, as it relates to funding eligibility and administration, and that it fails to replace the NADP (Groover, 2015; Mayer, 2015). However, Lara Wilson, the chair of CCA, has described it as “a step in the right direction [that] will contribute much needed resources to build capacity, and to preserve, describe and make archival materials available to Canadians” (cited in CCA [2015, n.p.]).

In conclusion, to quote once again from the RSC’s expert panel’s report (2014, p. 11), “Equitable societies remove barriers between citizens and the material they need to enrich, inform, and improve their lives.” To this end, members of the Canadian library and archival community support the position articulated by the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society (2013, p. 3) that “the fate of information should not be politicized. Discarding library and archival collections or allowing information to be lost should not occur due to political expediency of ideology.”

## POSTSCRIPT

Since the time of this paper’s writing, a new Canadian government has been elected. Prior to the federal election on October 19, 2015, the Liberal Party of Canada (which went on to form the new majority government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau) indicated that “On the Heritage Front, we will support Library and Archives Canada and our museums, support efforts to preserve our built heritage and natural sites and examine measures favouring philanthropy and private investment in arts

and culture” (Canadian Arts Coalition, 2015, p. 4). Yet much to the disappointment of many, no mention of the restoration of funding to LAC was made in the Minister of Canadian Heritage Mandate Letter from the prime minister (Prime Minister of Canada, 2015). Members of the library and archival community look forward to the restoration of funding for Canada’s memory institutions, and also to the restoration of authority to these institutions so that they may fulfill their legislated mandates without political interference.

## NOTE

1. These are words/terms/expressions that were used by authors in many different forums in response to actions taken by the Conservative government with respect to LAC and other government libraries. Within this context they serve as an introduction to the paper.

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